THE FINNISH FASHION ENTREPRENEUR-SHIP ECOSYSTEM

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Master Thesis
2015
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INTRODUCTION

For some time already, there has been a lot of discussion about the challenges of fashion entrepreneurship in Finland in particular its inability to achieve sufficient growth and reaching the international markets (Lille, 2010). It is suggested that this is not due to the lack of design talent[1], but rather a lack of business know-how and the competitiveness of the field (Salonoja, 2013). Ideas for creating a support organism for the fashion field in Finland have surfaced in recent years (Salonoja, 2013) and studies have been undertaken about similar organisms in Sweden and in Denmark (Lille, 2010) (Salonoja, 2013), but until now there has been no concerted action towards this in Finland.

[1] Excellent design education, top ranking of universities in the world; Young Finnish fashion designers winning two years in a row the Hyeres fashion competition; top-designer positions in internationally renown fashion companies for Finnish designers etc.

The purpose of this study is to explore the possibility of creating a better support organism for the Finnish fashion field that will increase the market value of fashion business domestically and internationally, facilitate the collaboration between the different stakeholders and help fashion entrepreneurship. This study will also look into how to create a sustainable entrepreneurship ecosystem in the fashion field by trying to understand the gap between the demand from the designers and the resources offered by the existing support services in the field. This study will point out the Finnish fashion ecosystems weaknesses by exploring the aforementioned gap between the supply and demand of support services and offer ideas for fashion field specific solutions.

The first part has as an objective to give a holistic overview of the fashion field in Finland and a general understanding of this business by using existing data and knowledge. This will help the reader to understand the area of fashion that will be looked at and the target group of fashion design business that is talked about. This part also helps to create an interest group that will be interviewed later in this study.

In the second part the objectives are to understand theoretically what is a business ecosystem and how sustainable startup ecosystems are created through research of academic literature, thus providing a framework to use for the purpose of the study.

In the third part, this research will describe what kind of stakeholders are involved in the fashion ecosystem in Finland and map them out through two different paths:

a) to give the fashion designer point of view, by conducting queries of the fashion designers, it will give an understanding of the different types of fashion designers working in the field. Then it will concentrate on the found entrepreneur-types, in order to provide knowledge on their biggest challenges within fashion business and entrepreneurial activities.

b) the research will create an understanding of the offered entrepreneurial services in the fashion field by interviewing the other key stakeholders of the fashion business in Finland. This will lead to a map of the Finnish fashion entrepreneurship ecosystem, by using Daniel Isenberg's framework and making it possible to discover the similarities and differences between a general entrepreneurship ecosystem and the fashion field specific ecosystem. Finally, this research will show the gaps between the need of the designers and the offering of services of the stakeholders by overlapping the different findings and analysing the outcomes.

The fourth part of this study will explore the findings of the previous parts by proposing different strategies as to how to create better services for a sustainable future entrepreneurship ecosystem for the Finnish fashion field and by using different scenarios to be taken under concideration.

In the fifth and the final part, this research will gather together points as to how the Finnish fashion entrepreneurship ecosystem looks like and propose action points as to what should be done next.

1 *The Fashion Business: General Overview of Fashion as a business in Finland*

2 *Business and Entrepreneurship Ecosystems: Research of Academic Literature and Framework*

3 *The Finnish Fashion Entrepreneurship Ecosystem:*

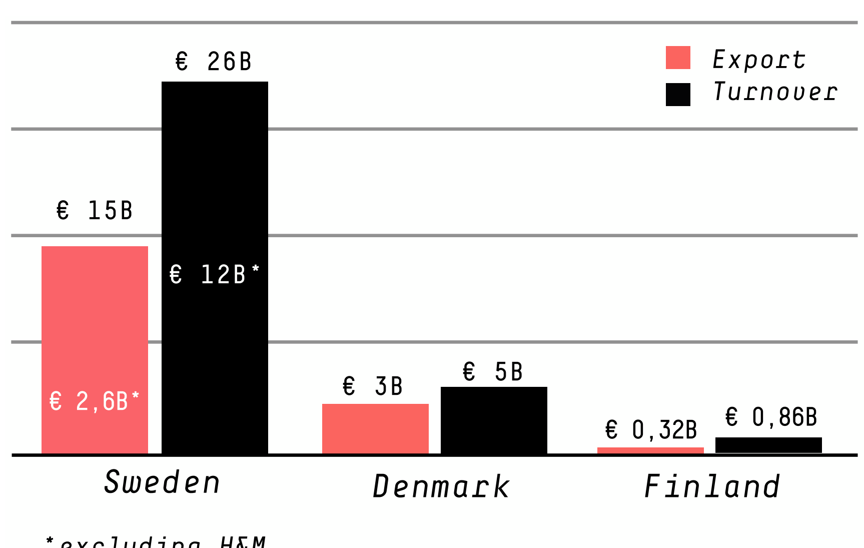
- *The Existing Competence Pool: What Kind of Fashion Designers are there in Finland?*
- *The Fashion Entrepreneur: What are their Specific Challenges?*
- *The Stakeholders of Fashion Entrepreneurs: Who are Offering Services to the Fashion Design Entrepreneurs?*
- *The Domains of Fashion Entrepreneurship Ecosystem: What services are offered and to whom?*

4 *Filling the Gap in the Ecosystem: Scenarios to be taken under concideration*

5 *Conclusions*

"In order to attack the problem, one must understand the holistic view of the fashion industry and how it functions from different stakeholders' point of view."

Fashion Industry Turnover and Exports in the Nordics



Finatex 2014

1.
THE FASHION BUSINESS

In order to attack the problem, one must understand the holistic view of the fashion industry and how it functions from different stakeholders' point of view. (Helena Pekkarinen, Diges Ry, interview, 5.2.2013)

In this part, the objectives are to gain a holistic view of the fashion field in Finland and a general understanding of this business by using existing data and knowledge. This will define the area of fashion that is looked at and create an interest group that will be analysed more deeply later.

In comparison with other Scandinavian countries, Finland is far behind in terms of creative fields exports (Lindroos & Laine, 2013). The fashion business in particular is crying out for help in order to grow and expand exports and become internationally recognised. Numbers show that out of the Scandinavian (Nordic) countries, Denmark is the leader in fashion export, with Sweden just slightly behind. Finland has small export points mainly to Russia, Sweden and Germany[2], but not enough considering that Finland has a key position geographically towards these huge potential markets. In addition, Finnish design could gain a competitive image internationally as a leading design producer also in other countries and continents, since the design is known and very appreciated globally.

[2] Finatex 2013

From the design point of view, Finnish fashion receives a lot of curiosity globally: Aalto University is known to be one of the top-ranked design universities in the world and the fashion education keeps on receiving more and more attention with its students receiving prizes in international fashion competitions, like the Hyeres Festival and many graduates are working around the globe in big fashion companies in key design positions.[3]

[3] See link n°1

Lille (2010) tells, that in order to help Finnish fashion industry, the export figures have to grow because Finland itself is not a big enough market for it. So it is not only about the design, it is also about the business. Many export initiatives have been created in the past in order to help the local fashion business growth through international visibility, like Hirameki in Japan, FinNoir in Paris, Helsinki Fresh in Berlin and Paloni in New York. Most of these initiatives have been one-off projects with funding from foundations or the government. They were organised by the help of Finnish nonprofit organisations, like the Design Forum Finland, which is now going through rough times with employer-employee negotiations[4] and budget cuts or the Finnish Cultural Institutions, who recently showed with a study, that these export initiatives are not creating the wanted visibility nor the help needed in the industry (Lindroos & Laine, 2013) so something else needs to be done. Only one initiative, Pre Helsinki, has become a proper channel that has become a brand in its own, something recognisable and repeating, but it includes only a very selected amount of brands. So, what could be done in order to expand the fashion export and help the local fashion business to grow?

[4] See link n° 2

The Fashion and textile Industry vs. The Creative Industry in Finland

There is very little data about the Finnish fashion field, as it is understood in this research. In general, from a policy point of view, there is an understanding of the clothing and textile industry, that takes into account the big industry firms, that are often seen as old fashioned and a dying sector in Finland since the production has moved elsewhere and their style is based on necessity of self-production in case of economic uncertainty. This industry, the so-called rag or button-business, can be seen in the data available to us through statistics generated by sales, export numbers, human resources, employment, education, taxation, law and all other industry measures. This field contains fibre and yarn manufacturers, textile and clothes factories, construction and medical equipment producers, fur and leather industry, even the sales labour force, maintenance and retail services[5]. This production industry is dying in Finland, many factories are closing and there is less and less jobs offered in this field.

[5] Finatex 2015

"The data about the clothing and textile industry completely lack information about small and medium size fashion businesses that function in Finland."

CATEGORISATION OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN FINLAND AND SWEDEN

FINLAND	SWEDEN
Animation	Architecture
Architecture services	Arts
Film and television production	Design
Fine arts and galleries	Dining
Handicraft	Experience-based learning
Sports and leisure services	Fashion
Advertising and marketing	Film
Design services	Literature
Music and program services	Market communications
Gaming industry	Music
Radio and sound production	Performing arts
Art and antique markets	Photography
Dance and theatre	The media
Communications	Tourism
(Tarjanne & Kaunisharju, 2007)	Video games industry
	(Nielsén, 2008)

There is also another understanding, which is the one of culture and the creative fields in Finland, that take into account animation, architecture services, film and television production, fine arts and galleries, handicraft, sports and leisure services, advertising and marketing, design services, music and program services, gaming industry, radio and sound production, art and antique markets, dance and theatre and communications (Tarjanne & Kaunisharju, 2007), where fashion is often understood as part of the design services or handicraft, but unfortunately has not received sufficient attention officially on a policy level that affects for example the financing of the field. This categorisation also seems to penalise income and sales, since most of the funding available to the creative fields is not to be used for making business, but for creating nonprofit culture (Härkönen, 2013).

The data about the clothing and textile industry completely lack information about small and medium size fashion businesses that function in Finland and it is these companies and designers that are actually the ones relevant for this study, because they are the ones that could create growth for the local economy.

Finland is not the only country where the definition of the fashion business should be remodelled towards a more modern understanding (EU, 2012) since it is still one of the biggest businesses in the world and it has a huge potential for innovation and change like Imran Amed, founder and editor-in-chief of BoF says: "Globally, fashion is a $1.5 trillion dollar industry that employs millions of people, makes important contribution to the global economy and impacts the lives of trillions of people every day."

In Sweden on the contrary, the creative industries take into account architecture, arts, design, dining, experience-based learning, fashion, film, literature, market communications, music, performing arts, photography, the media, tourism and video games industry (Nielsén, 2008) – a much more modern view on the subject and thus more efficient when it comes to support and innovation. This allows policy makers to take decisions that support not only the educational system but also the other matters related directly to fashion business and its contribution to the domestic economy.

The reason why the Swedish creative industries segmentation is a good example for this study is that it is developed and categorised through three segments: Fields that create duplicable products and use serial production, fields that are based on live experiences and fields that offer services and products that add value. Here fashion takes place in the first category as an opportunity that is closer to the understanding searched in this study, because it allows the business to thrive instead of penalising income, like in the Finnish model.

In this study, fashion business should be understood as an opportunity created by great design and innovative business models. The fashion field is not about the clothing and textile industry, which is statured by the local markets and local competition, but it is about fashion and design fields challenged by the international markets and competition. These are two completely different approaches to the industry, since the core activities and aims are different (Lille, 2010).

In short, globally fashion business is a huge opportunity, but in Finland fashion entrepreneurship falls in between industry and culture categories on a policy level and is not receiving the support that it needs. The design has been proven excellent, but the business has trouble creating an impact on the local economy and competing in international markets. The field requires a holistic view, in order to change the way we approach the subject and it is not enough to create "just another initiative", without having all the pieces of the puzzle in place first.

"The fashion field is not about the clothing and textile industry, which is saturated by the local markets and local competition, but it is about fashion and design fields challenged by the international markets and competition."

“Business ecosystem is an economic community supported by a foundation of interacting organisations and individuals— the organisms of the business world.”

2. BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEMS

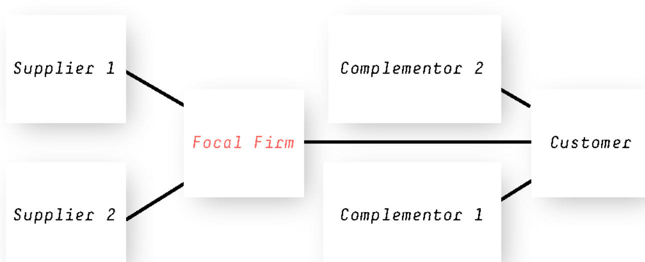
This part will concentrate on understanding what is a business ecosystem according to James F. Moore (1993) and how sustainable startup ecosystems are created according to Daniel Isenberg, thus giving a framework to use in this study, as an objective to give us a holistic overview of the Finnish fashion entrepreneurship field.

James F. Moore first introduced the word business ecosystem in the early 1990's. Moore used it to describe his strategic planning concept in his article "Predators and Prey: A New Ecology of Competition" (Moore J. F., 1993). Moore defined the business ecosystem as follows:

"An economic community supported by a foundation of interacting organizations and individuals—the organisms of the business world. The economic community produces goods and services of value to customers, who are themselves members of the ecosystem. The member organisms also include suppliers, lead producers, competitors, and other stakeholders. Over time, they coevolve their capabilities and roles, and tend to align themselves with the directions set by one or more central companies. Those companies holding leadership roles may change over time, but the function of ecosystem leader is valued by the community because it enables members to move toward shared visions to align their investments, and to find mutually supportive roles."

Moore uses several ecological metaphors, describing how firms are embedded in a business environment and that they need to evolve together with other related companies and become proactive in developing mutual beneficial or as he calls it, symbiotic relationships with customers, suppliers and even competitors.

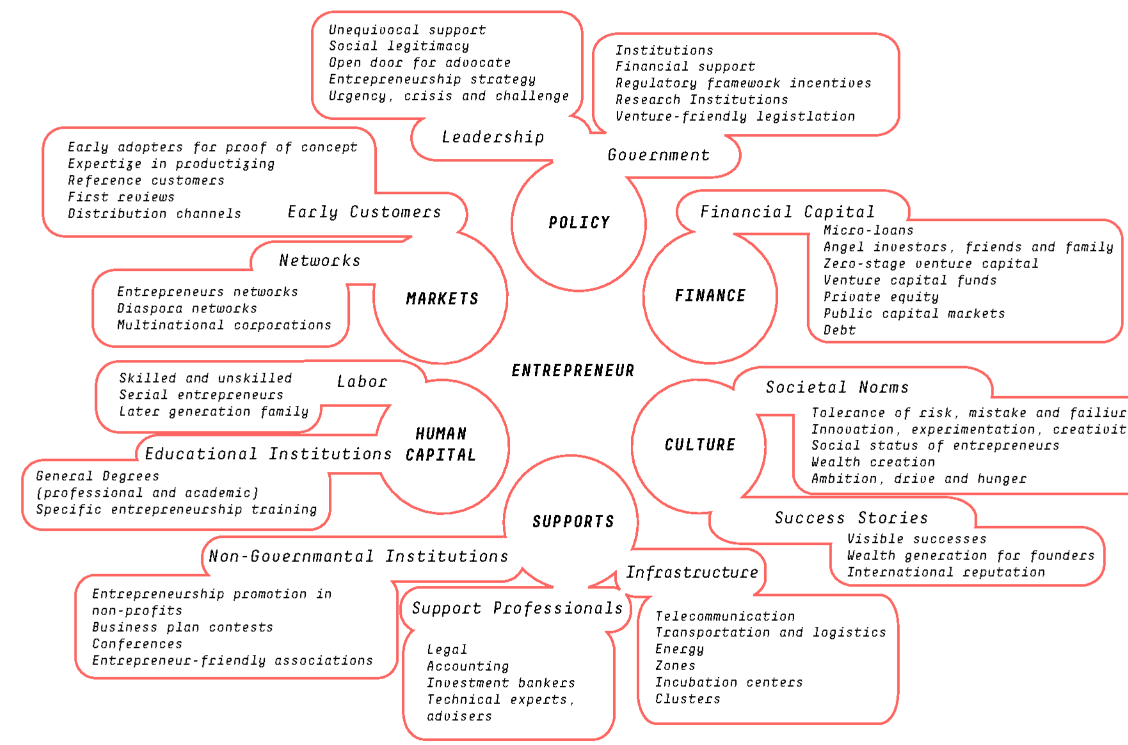
After Moore and his theories of the firm strategies to take into consideration (Moore J. F., 1993), the use of biology-related metaphors in understanding complex business activities and their development spread. For example the studies of the members and their roles in a business ecosystem (Iansiti & Levien, 2004), the business ecosystems evolution (Tiwana;Konsynski;& Bush, 2010) and the dynamics of change in business ecosystems (Adner & Kapoor, 2006) became general ways of describing best practices in business management, strategy, structure and operations, especially in the information technology industry. (Mäkinen & Dedehayir, 2012)



Mäkinen and Dedehayir's adoption (2012) of Adner and Kapoor's (2010) schema of business ecosystems from a view of a module producing firm. The Focal Firm here, being a fashion design company or entrepreneur.

The ecosystem thinking also spreads to the study of startups and the communities created by them. Like Moore already had pointed out, the ecosystem is composed of a community of interacting organisations and individuals, Daniel Isenberg has undertaken studies of the startup ecosystem structure and components (Isenberg D. , 2011). Isenberg's studies reveal from a policy perspective how entrepreneurship is understood as a strategy and how it should be cultivated in different environments. Isenberg also explains how in order to create a self-sustainable startup ecosystem, there is a need for conductive policy, markets, capital, human skills, culture and support. These six categories can be seen as the structural components of the startup ecosystem and they can be used as an integrative framework for startup ecosystem research (Sipola;Mainela;& Puhakka, 2013).

Community of interacting organisations and individuals that create the entrepreneurship ecosystem structure and components: Policy, Market, Finance, Human Capital, Culture and Support

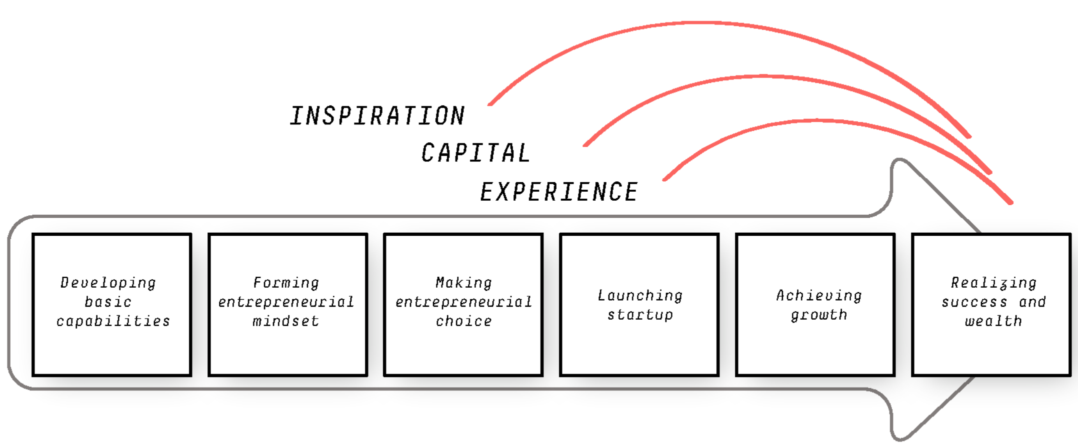


Isenberg's domains of an entrepreneurial ecosystem and examples of its community (2011)

The sustainability of the ecosystem comes from the fact that it has all the necessary facilitating components (policy, market, finance, human capital, culture and support) and that it can create what Isenberg calls spillovers, and nourishes itself thus creating growth.

Isenberg also emphasizes that focus on very specific, concentrated geographies is important since for entrepreneurship to be self-sustaining, it requires and ecosystem, and an ecosystem requires proximity so the different domains can evolve together and become mutually reinforcing (Isenberg D. , 2011).

Isenberg's ideology, of the structural components of an ecosystem and how it is the interaction between the organizations and the individuals that affect the well being of the whole community, gives this research a framework to start by analysing the components the Finnish fashion entrepreneurship field. In the next chapter, this research will try and point out the members of the Finnish fashion entrepreneurship ecosystem and concentrate on the interactions between the two. As is pointed out, emphasizing the study of entrepreneurs and startups as pool of competence together with other relevant actors present in the ecosystem could help in understanding the challenges that designers are facing when entering the entrepreneurial path.



Isenberg's spillovers of inspiration, capital and experience that nourish the ecosystem (2011)

"Principle. Distinguish among self-employment, SMEs and entrepreneurship, and focus on the latter, in which case most of the former two will take care of themselves."

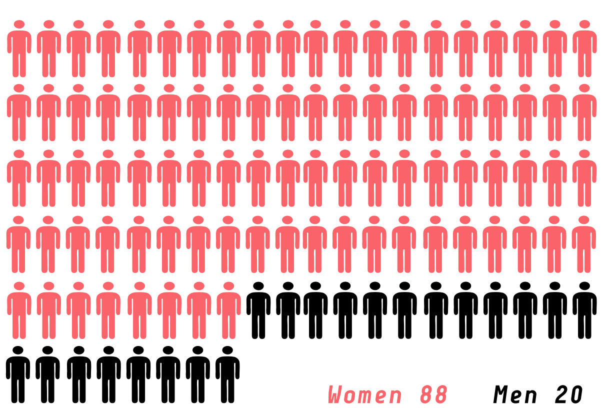
3.
THE FINNISH FASHION ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM

In this chapter, this research will describe what kind of stakeholders are involved in the fashion ecosystem in Finland and map them out through two different paths: Firstly, by conducting queries, it will give an understanding of the different types of fashion designers acting in entrepreneurial roles. Then it will concentrate on the entrepreneur –types thus providing knowledge on their biggest challenges with fashion business and their own growth. Secondly, the research will create an understanding the offered services in the field by interviewing the other key stakeholders of fashion business in Finland (e.g. associations, institutions, decision makers, business consulting professionals, etc.). This will lead us into revealing the gaps between the need of the designers and the offering of services of the constituent stakeholders.

Putting the results of the uncovered gaps in Isenberg's framework, will give us a map of the Finnish fashion entrepreneurship ecosystem and show us it's weaknesses.

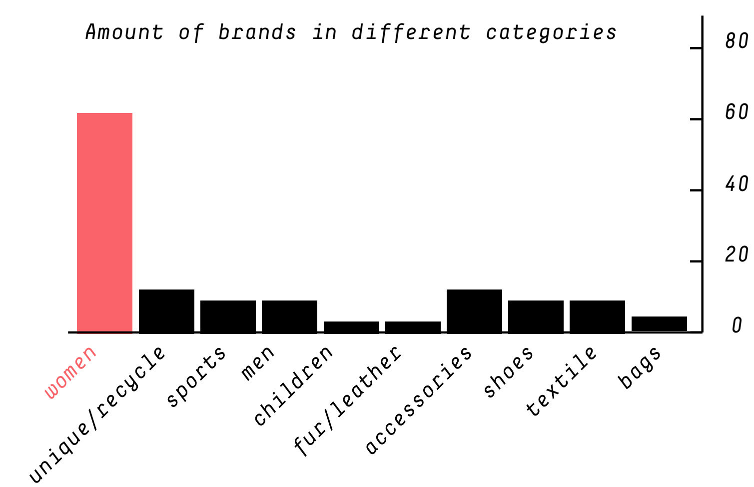
THE EXISTING COMPETENCE POOL

Starting with the designers, understanding the existing education towards the field and the existing labour force in the fashion industry, research was undertaken by conducting queries of 100+ Finnish fashion designers about their education and their entrepreneurial activities. A questionnaire was shared through different social media channels asking fashion designers to answer it. The questionnaire was shared in Facebook through different groups and pages, but also through LinkedIn channels and groups. The author is known in the fashion field on a friendly basis with many of the designers, so creating a viral impact was quite easy. The questionnaire was also very simple with multiple-choice answers to make it as fast as possible to answer. To support the questionnaire, a study of the Finnish education ministry (Lahti, 2012) was used to understand the bigger picture of the educational system also towards fashion. What are the different possibilities to study to become a designer and what are the given degrees? This helped in the multiple-choice creation and in understanding the average number of designers entering the field per year.



For the purpose of this study, it was necessary to find out who is the designer in question and what is his/her path to becoming a designer. What is fashion, fashion design and fashion entrepreneurship? Who is the type member of the fashion entrepreneurship ecosystem and what is the help and support that specific type of designer needs? In other words, who is the perfect member for the ecosystems community?

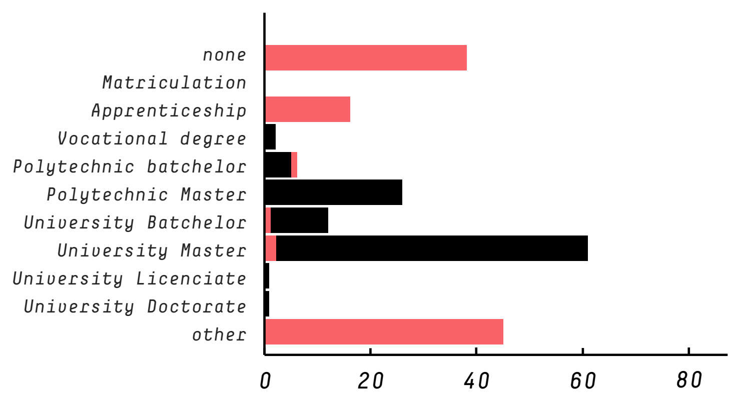
This questionnaire included designers that work with clothes (women, men and children), accessories (like hats, bags or neckwear) or with shoes, in general meaning wearables as a main product. Also, trying to concentrate on wearables made mainly with textile or leather, excluding thus jewellery, eye wear and watches that are here rather considered to be product design than fashion design. This questionnaire tried to exclude handicraft workers who make the production completely themselves and whose main aim is creating a job only for themselves trough small sales instead of aiming to create a scalable business. The categorisation is very complicated because the field is very scattered, but hopefully this gives a better idea of the research objectives.



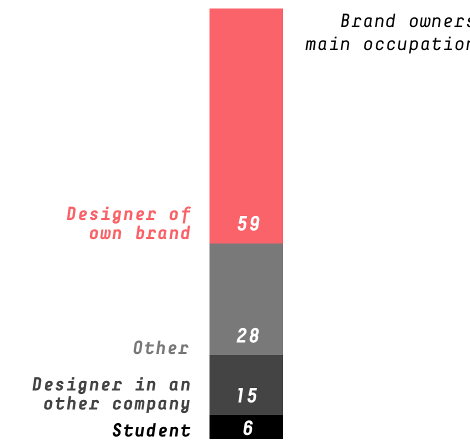
The first query round conducted reached +100 Finnish fashion related designers. They were asked about their brand, occupation, title, education and category of wearables[6]. This led to the understanding about how scattered the whole field was, since it was difficult to find common points between the answers. The most common points were, that in Finland, designers acquire education after the comprehensive school from an academic track or a vocational track. Most of the people working as fashion designers have completed their formal studies, meaning graduated, so it seems that being a designer, requires an education or training. To simplify, the path of a designer starts when he or she graduates or exits from an educational institution.

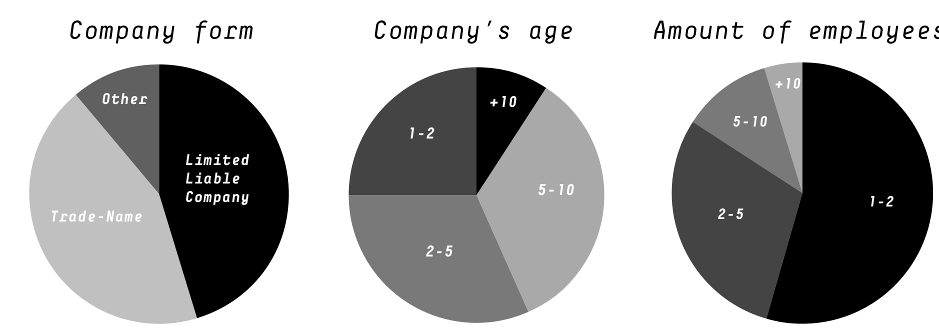
[6] See exhibit "List of contacted designers (N+100)"

*Brand owners education in **DESIGN** and in **BUSINESS***



All of the answerers had their own brand, meaning they were working towards an own created identity and many of them had a form of a company (freelance, self-employed or limited liability company). Most of the ones that had a company were not actively building it, meaning they had a full time job somewhere else or were studying.





*DESIGNERS / BRANDS annual **REVENUE**, from which UNKNOWN (2013)*

So how to distinguish among the 100+ designers the ones that belong to the group of actual entrepreneurs, who have an opportunity to create startups that have the potential of actually affecting the local economy by creating spillovers, and who strengthen the gene-pool of the fashion entrepreneurship field?

By sending out additional questions to the designers and brand owners that seemed to be interested in entrepreneurship based on their previous answers, the idea was to get a more precise understanding of what is their aim or vision for the future and what do they know about the existing stakeholder ecosystem. "Are you interested in entrepreneurship, building your own brand and creating your own company? Do you want to grow your existing company? Where do you see yourself in 5 years? What methods and means do you use for growing and internationalisation? What kind of funding have you used? Where do you find information or help in entrepreneurship related questions? Who is your role model for design? If you could choose to work for your role model or create your own brand, which would you do? Are you participating in any startup/entrepreneurship events? How do you grow your network?" gave perspective to understand the risk that the designers were ready to take for achieving their dreams and how they did it.

Together these two questionnaires show which of the designers are actively building their brand and business and could be the potential members of the entrepreneurial community. Do the designers have the desire, the means and the opportunity to become entrepreneurs and do they have the necessary skills and knowledge to create or find the solutions for achieving it. This led to a categorisation in 'designer types' through opportunity recognition (Ardichvili;Cardozo;& Ray, 2003).

As in the original image by A. Ardichvili et al., in 'the lower left cell the value sought is unidentified and value creation capability is undefined (opportunities and solutions both unknown)'— represent the kind of creativity associated with the designers that work as artists, 'interested in moving proprietary knowledge in a new direction or pushing technology past its current limits' to a space of dream. These fashion designers are not interested in making better business or achieving growth. They are more concerned with their own personal freedom as creators. These are type I.

Creative Freedom: Differentiator that works mostly with form (shape, texture, colour, trends, meaning, etc.) and with aesthetics, styling and decoration as tools creating conceptually powerful work, which is often unique and needs alteration for mass-production. Ground breaking innovation opportunity and media-sexiness are high. Haute couture–like staging and visual work are common.

'The lower right cell—where value sought is identified but capability undefined (opportunities are known but solutions are not)' — describes the fashion field actors who understand the business logic, but don't have the necessary means to create a product that is competitive enough for the market. Type II.

New Designer–type: Interpreter that works mostly with function (use, purpose, ergonomics, environment, lifestyle, etc.) and tools related to understanding of the existing market and production. Often ready to wear, easy to copy, meaning difficult to create break-through products. Ability to create production chains and uses existing infrastructure, but lacks of competitive vision and differentiation skills.

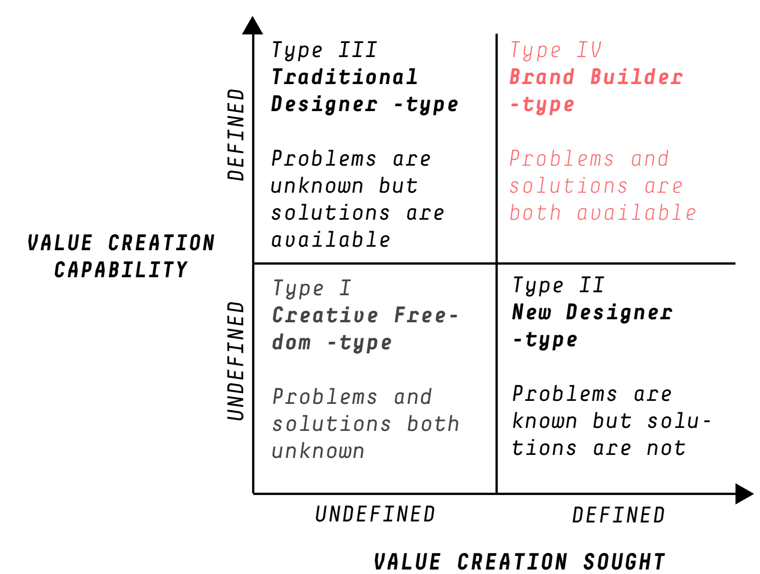
'The upper left cell — where value sought is unidentified but capability is defined (opportunities are unknown but solutions are available)' — includes what is identified as the product driven innovation. This includes the designers that have a capability to create new and innovative designs because of an existing skill set, but they don't have the understanding of the business side. Type III.

Traditional Designer–type: Implementer that works mostly with manufacturability (materials, processes, technology, durability, reliability, etc.) and with engineering, economy and recycling type of tools. They are extremely skilful, have precise knowledge and understanding of a technique or style, good problem solving skills and general vision of usability. Works often for a company that offers the production and market chains to facilitate the concentration in creation.

'In the upper right cell — where value sought is identified and capability defined (both opportunities and solutions are known) — opportunity development involves matching known resources and needs to form businesses that can create and deliver value.' These designers could be called Champions[7]. They are the role models for others, more likely to succeed in getting funding and grow on the international markets and create positive spillovers on the ecosystem by heightening the value of fashion, creating new jobs and sharing experience. Type IV.

[7] Term used by Brad Feld to describe an entrepreneurs who has the potential of being a role-model for others (Feld, 2012).

Brand-builder–type: Strategist that works with the marketability (price, position, competition, distribution, brand, etc.) and with strategic and system design and cultural factors as tools. It is a rare type alone, but often found as a duo of designer–types working and building a brand together, where the other one has more of a differentiator or interpreter role and the other one has more of an implementer or strategic role. In many cases the background of this type of designer shows maturity gained through working as a designer previously for a company.



Lille (2010) categorised the types of designers in Finland in three groups. The creative freedom–type, the traditional designer–type and the brand builder–type. She explained that the "creative freedom"–types are or will become freelancers or self-employed, most of the time. They have an aspiration only toward the creativity, and are not willing to risk this freedom by becoming employees or thinking of making money or business. The designer–types are made to work for other people in design or other fields. They are future employees of different size enterprises. The brand-builder–types are the ones that have the potential of becoming entrepreneurs. They are the ones that have the vision design wise, but also business wise, and the willingness to attack the world even at the cost of loosing everything.

Creating a categorisation in 'designer types' through the opportunity recognition (Ardichvili;Cardozo;& Ray, 2003) showed, that Lille (2010) was right, but that the traditional designer -type could be divided in two: those who are more business oriented and those who are more design oriented. Coming back to the fact that Finland is know for its design[8], this could suggest that the fashion field actors who understand the business logic, but don't have the necessary means, i.e., design competence to create a product that is competitive enough for the market (type II), are rare or nonexistent. This is also shown by the education of the designers: most of them have studied design, but only a few have had education in other fields like marketing or entrepreneurship, that are as important to the business.

[8] Hyeres competition

So adding to Lille's (2010) categorisation of the different designer–types, the first (I) type is the creative freedom–type. The type two (II) and type three (III) are the designer–types, who in some cases own a specific talent of producing work (e.g. a technique) or the imagination or vision for an idea (e.g. a design). The type four (IV) are the brand builder–types, the true entrepreneurial types that have the biggest potential in creating new businesses and startups that can reach the demanded understanding that fashion business should be an opportunity created by great design and innovative business models that are challenged by the international markets and competition.

THE FINNISH FASHION ENTREPRENEUR

"Principle. Distinguish among self-employment, SMEs and entrepreneurship, and focus on the latter, in which case most of the former two will take care of themselves." (Isenberg D. , 2011)

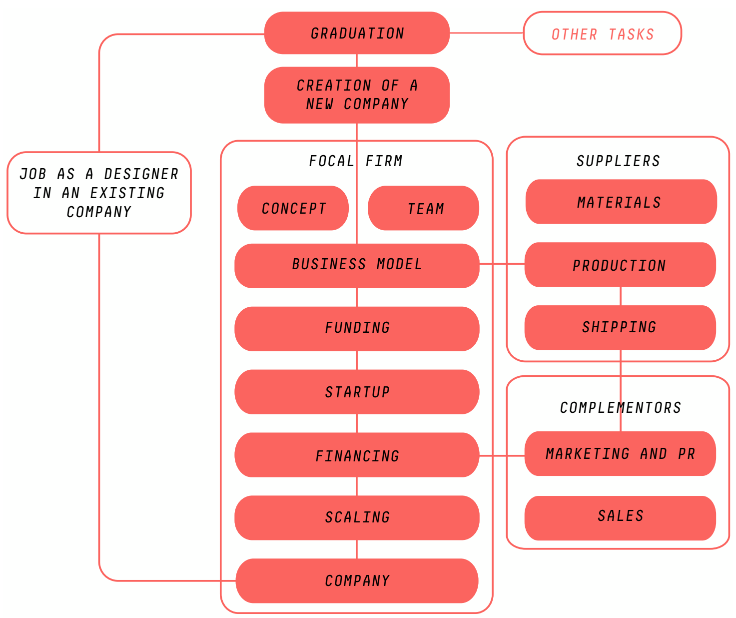
Approximately one fifth of the designers seemed to be type four (IV), the brand builder –types, the entrepreneurial types that have the biggest potential in creating scalable new businesses and startups, and creating spillovers that can positively affect the local ecosystem, based on the answers in the questionnaire. They had a strong idea of what they wanted to achieve, had clear goals for the future and were actively building their brand/company, thus taking risk and working hard to achieve it. They were the ones working full time on their own brand, taking the most risk financially, and participating actively towards the community by acknowledging the existing stakeholders and participating to the discussion around different matters and concerns.

With the previous, there were some type II designers[9], who were building a brand together with a type III designer, so there were two founders, thus both, the design and the business side, represented.

[9] Here to simplify the writing, I will call type II –designers also "designers", even though they might actually be something else of background.

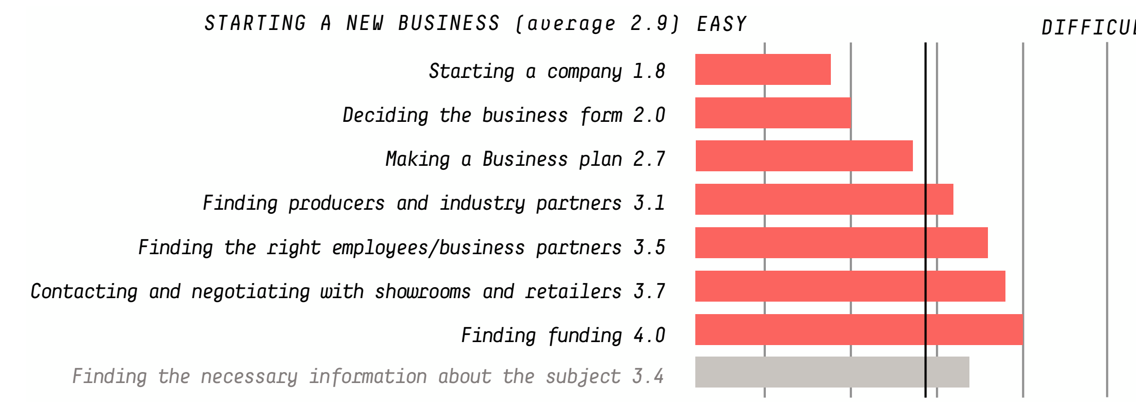
As Isenberg says (Isenberg D. , 2011), self-employment per se, is not entrepreneurship: self-employment plus aspiration to grow usually is. This is often difficult to understand in creative fields, since a creative, a designer, always has aspiration in order to produce work and thus engages in an activity that will only create value, if at all, later. Being a creative is so close of being and entrepreneur, that both of them have the perception that they possess an opportunity because they have an asset, a piece of information, an assessment, an idea or an ability and thus making risky investments (of time), because they actually perceive their risks to be lower than others' because, in the creative case, their design is better.

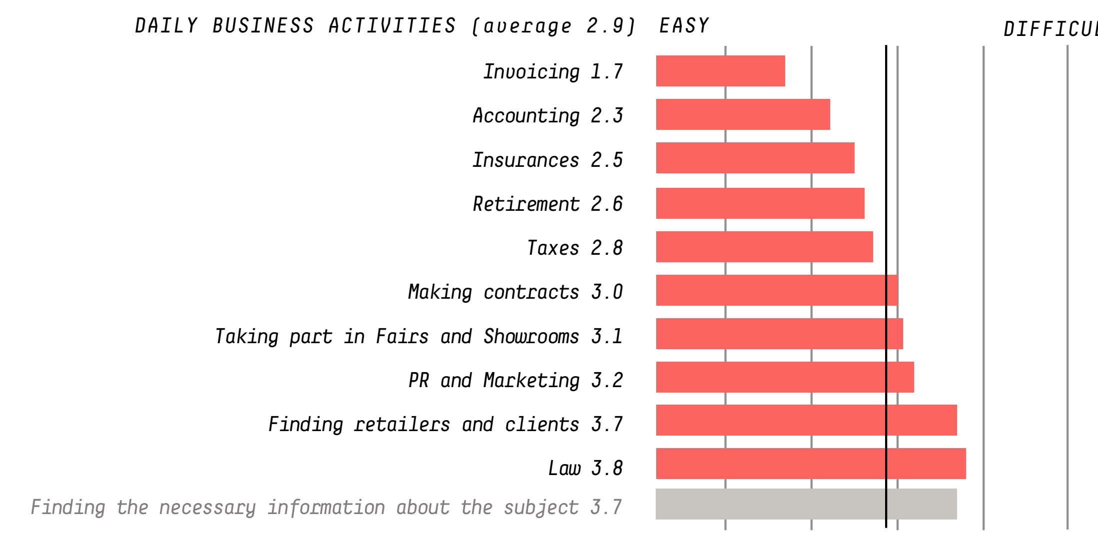
These 20 designers were chosen as the group to focus on for this study. It was important to understand what they knew about the existing ecosystem, how they perceived entrepreneurship, what kind of help they sought or were using and what they thought was missing. In the first part these fashion entrepreneurs answered questions about the difficulty of starting, running and growing a business and about how difficult they thought finding information was.

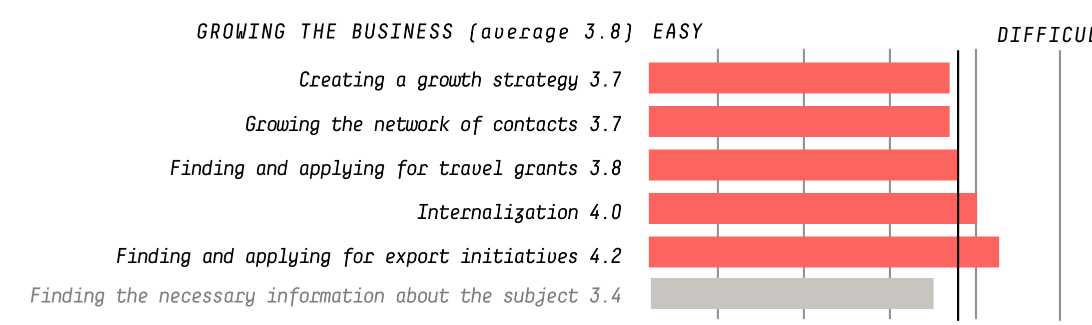


Path of a designer after graduation: Getting A job as a designer in an existing company, going to do other tasks or creating their own company. Image based on the lean startup lifecycle by Steve Blank (2013).

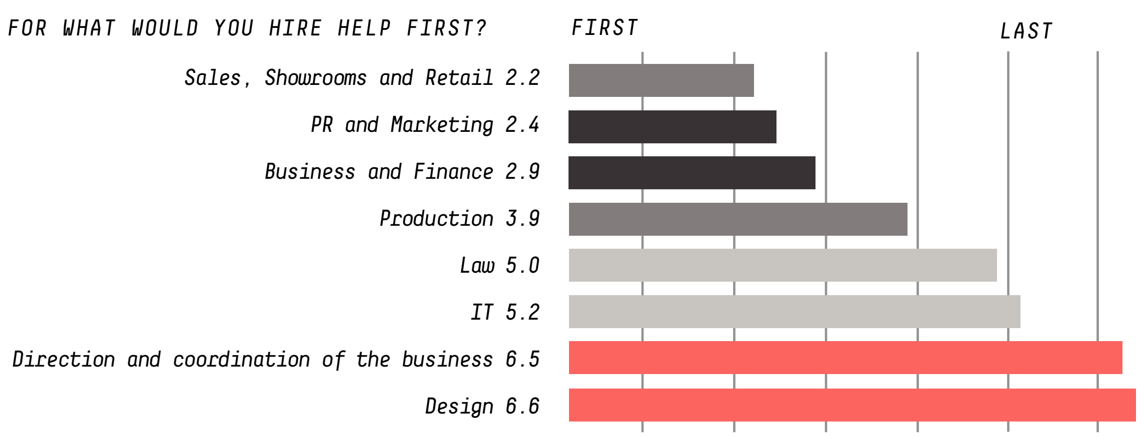
In all the stages, starting, running and growing the business, the designers felt that finding the necessary information in average was difficult. After finding the information, the starting or running the daily activities were not difficult, but growing the business was. Finding producers, employees, business partners and retailers was difficult and time consuming. Negotiations and PR and marketing activities were also challenging. The most difficult activities were finding funding, internationalisation and finding and applying for export initiatives.





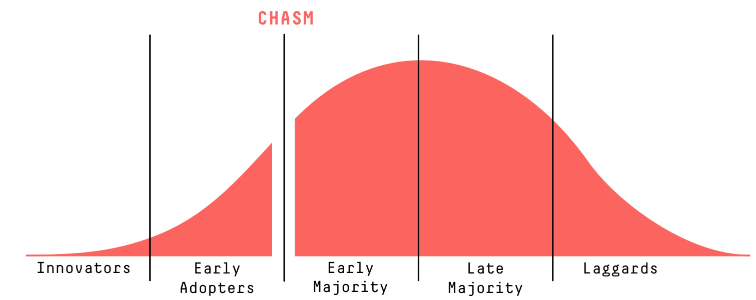


In the second part of the questionnaire designers were asked questions about hiring talent or finding partners, what tasks do they want to do themselves and what do they need the most help with. Very interesting was that "Direction and coordination of the business" was as important to the designers as design work to keep in their own hands: it got the score of 6.5. It seemed that the designers did not understand that by finding the right kind of business partner or external help, the difficulties could be avoided easily and the designers could concentrate more on only the part they know best of: the design work.



According to Parker (Parker, 2003), the advantages of a multidisciplinary team are speed, complexity, organisational learning and creativity. This is also true for teams behind innovative ventures. Multidisciplinary teams are more likely to solve complex problems, develop cross- functional skills in order to work with people from other disciplines and increase the creative capacity of an organisation. According to Winkel (Winkel, 2012), design companies success depends on the core team and the ability to cross Moore's Chasm concept (Moore G. A., 2000). Here, the brands created by duos of type II and type III designers show a conciderable strenght, since many of the companies that have a yearly revenue of more that 200 000 euros have more than one founder.

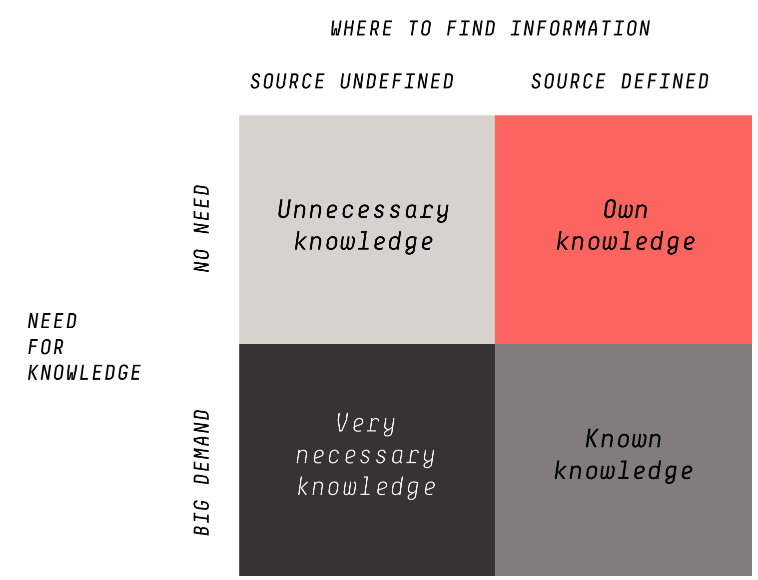
This questionnaire reveals not only in what the designers think they are good at, but also what they think is important for their business



Design companies success depends on it's tems ability to cross the chasm. (Geoffrey Moore's Chasm concept, 2000)

since the lowest scores here are their own knowledge (e.g. design) or unnecessary knowledge (e.g. IT and law) and the highest scores are very necessary/needed knowledge (e.g. PR and marketing) and known knowledge (e.g. production).

These results show what kind of help the design entrepreneurs need and what they feel is lacking. So now, it is necessary to find out what kind of help is offered by different stakeholders and in the end, analyse if something specific is actually missing.



THE STAKEHOLDERS OF FASHION ENTREPRENEURS

What could the Finnish fashion field ecosystem look like from a designers point of view? "The success depends on the health of the numerous domains – some of which comprise thousands of organisations – that make up its ecosystem." (Iansiti & Levien, 2004).

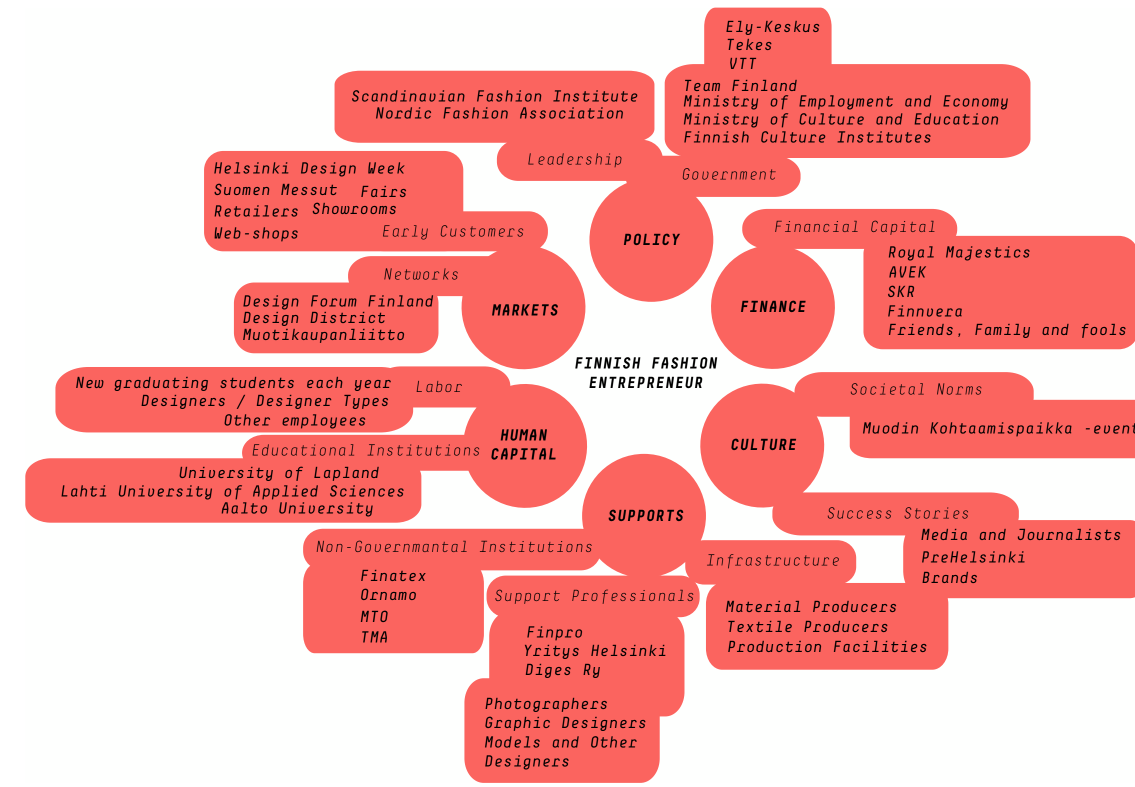
Adner and Kapoor (Adner & Kapoor, 2006) argue that external barriers to production and to adoption challenge successful innovation, and that to uncover the effect, an extensive strategic analysis of the environment must be understood - the upstream barriers to production and the downstream barriers to adoption can't be aggregated, but rather separate, otherwise the challenges could become invisible. This is why, to simplify, I decided to not concentrate on the production and adoption chains of the fashion industry, like different production facilities and market places.

Based on Isenberg's domains of an ecosystem, I created a list of potential stakeholders (page 48-49) of the existing infrastructure, support professionals, non-governmental institutions and others that offer the grounds for becoming an entrepreneur or services for running a business. I also used the information received previously from the questionnaires given to the designers to complement my own findings. For this part a series of stakeholders were interviewed to understand the who are their members or clients and what do they offer as services for them. It was also a way to get new leads on other potential players in the field.

In order to understand how fashion design as an ecosystem works in Finland, one has to understand what kinds of stakeholders already are involved. Based on the questions made to the designers of the services they use, here are few examples of categories what could be considered part of the fashion ecosystem stakeholders.

Finnish fashion ecosystem, concentrating only on the focal firms, the entrepreneurs, view without the production and adoption chains.

Finnish fashion entrepreneurship ecosystem based on Isenberg's domaons of an entrepreneurial ecosystem (2011)



Compared with Isenberg's domains of an ecosystem, this one had some differences. None of the designers considered Isenberg's examples of *Infrastructure* part of their ecosystem (e.g. energy and telecommunication), but instead there were a lot of examples of production related stakeholders. In addition, *Markets* were considered more through traditional sales channels of shops and retailers than trough *Early Customers* and *Networks*, like in Isenberg's framework. Other design professionals were a big part of the network designers saw around them, like photographers, graphic designers and models. The notion of *Leadership* within *Policy* didn't receive any matches, neither did *Culture*, thinking that these domains are completely unknown and/or unconsidered to the designers.

SOME OF THE FINNISH FASHION ECOSYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS OFFERING SERVICES TO THE DESIGN ENTREPRENEURS

Tekstiili ja vaateteollisuus ry Finatex
Finnish Textile and Fashion Industry Union
Client: Fashion and textile industry players with over 200 000e annual revenue. (fashion and textile companies, yarn and fiber makers, technical textiles producers, basically everything between bathing suits to aviation and farming suppliers)
Service: Lobbying and education of Finnish companies for better functions in Finland

Ornamo
Design Union
Client: All designers, students and professionals (ex. furniture design, fashion design, accessory design, jewellery, glass and porcelain, arts and crafts and so on)
Service: Lobbying, advisory services, events, publications and awards

Design District
Finnish Design neighborhood organization
Client: Shops and showrooms taking part in the community
Service: Bringing tourists to the Design District neighborhood and promoting the member shops

Design Forum Finland
Finnish Design Promotion
Client: Designers/Brands of all fields seeking for national and international visibility (ex. furniture design, fashion design, accessory design, jewelry, glass and porcelain, design agencies, design retailers and so on)
Service: Visibility of Finnish design in Finland and abroad

Vaatesuunnittelijoiden ja muotitaiteilijoiden intressiryhmä MTO
Fashion and clothing design intrest group (part of Ornamo)
Client: 221 fashion and clothing designers (2009)
Service: Lobbying, advisory services, events, publications and awards

Tekstiili- ja muotialat TMA on edunvalvonta- ja yhteistyöorganisaatio
Textile and fashion market union
Client: Fashion retailers, department stores, markets and importers
Service: producing data about the sales in Finland about textile, clothes, shoes, bags and sports markets.

Muotikaupan Liitto Ry
Fashion Commerce Union in Finland
Client: Fashion retailers, showrooms and shops, salespeople and shopkeepers (shoes, clothes, textiles, sports and fur and leather products)
Service: Lobbying and data about fashion commerce in Finland

Nordic Fashion Association and the Scandinavian Fashion Institute
Scandinavian fashion field organisation with Danish Fashion Institute, Oslo Fashion Week, The Swedish Fashion Council, Helsinki Design Week and Iceland's Fashion Council
Client: The Nordic Council of Ministers, Governments
Service: Lobbying

Finpro
Finnish advisory and export service organization for Finnish businesses
Client: Finnish businesses
Service: Advisory services in growth, internationalization, export and finance for lowering risks

Tekes
Finnish funding agency for innovation
Clients: Finnish companies, research organizations and public service providers
Service: Funding from Finnish government and EU

Ministry of Employment and Economy
Supporting organism of the entrepreneurial industries and through that the Fashion Business with local initiatives like funding and business sparring through Yritys Helsinki, Diges Ry and Ely-Keskus,
Client: any business owner
Service: business sparring, funding, advisory services,

Ministry of Culture and Education
Supporting organism for the creative fields and education related matters. Finnish Culture Institutes as a big player together with the universities (Aalto, Lahti Design Institute and Rovaniemi Design School) and research establishments
Client: any creative worker, artists, freelancers, students
Service: grants, residencies, networking, events, cultural export

Suomen Messut
Finnish Fair Center
Client: business owners and consumers
Service: bringing the two clients together through events and fairs

Royal Majestics
Fashion and Design Investment Fund
Client: Innovative design business looking for funding
Service: Funding, partnership, advisory services

Audiovisuaalisen kulttuurin edistämiskeskus AVEK
Under governmental agency for audio-visual culture
Client: Creative freelancers and business owners
Service: grants for projects and business modeling (CreaDemo), business model competitions (CD2)

Suomen Kulttuuri Rahasto SKR
Finnish Fund for Culture (and other private funds)
Client: artists, freelances, business owners, project groups, researchers
Service: funding

Helsinki Design Week
Client: Finnish designers, international media and consumers
Service: One week event each year to promote Finnish design, happening in Helsinki. As side event often fashion related shows and discussions

PreHelsinki
Helsinki Fashion happening
Client: 5-10 Finnish fashion brands coming together for pr- and marketing events together with Aalto University and Lahti design institute end of the year fashion shows.
Service: PR and marketing of Finnish fashion design excellence, fair participations, media coverage and export

Based on interviews with the stakeholder representatives and online research

THE DOMAINS OF FASHION ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM

So what happens if we take Isenberg's integrative framework and analyse the domains, the structure and the components of the Finnish fashion entrepreneurship ecosystem through demand and offering? Here, the research concentrates on mapping the stakeholders by the demand and offering of services found in the third part. By using Isenberg's framework for finding the similarities and differences between a "traditional" entrepreneurship ecosystem and a creative field, this study will highlight the Finnish fashion ecosystems main weaknesses.

From this it will be possible to borrow the successful or best practices and create an approach specific to the fashion field in Finland, that could be implemented in the creation of the supporting organism for the fashion field in Finland that will increase the market value of fashion locally and internationally, facilitate the collaboration between the different stakeholders and help fashion entrepreneurship.

Together with the stakeholder interviews, the understanding of what is offered already, and the community member (fashion entrepreneur) research, the understanding of what is needed, the opportunity recognition follows the steps of the discovery process. Recognising a gap between particular market need (the demand from members) and specific resources (what is the offering from the stakeholders) gives an opportunity - the demand is known, but the supply needs to be discovered (Sarasvathy, 2005). In other words, discovering the opportunity through effectual logic with a pre-determined goal (Sarasvathy, 2005).

What is possible to analyse through this chart (page 51-52), is that none of the stakeholders offer a holistic range of services or information where to get the right kind of service. Not for a specific phase of the company (starting a business, daily activities and growing the business), let alone the whole life span of the company. Also more than half of the stakeholders offer information and services only to their members. Some of the membership fees are

small, in some cases hundreds of euros, but some of the services need an investment of thousands of euros in order to gain access. This is also evident in the membership registry of the stakeholders, of what kinds of companies are using their services [10].

[10] Finatex and Ornamo membership registries

What is surprising in this analyse is that all of the designers business activities have at least one service provider, except for finding employees and business partners. But in order for a fashion entrepreneur to utilise these, they would have to become members in so many different associations and keep in touch with so many of the stakeholders that it would be questionable of how time consuming this would be. This might explain why the designers feel that finding the necessary information in the different stages is so challenging.

The "global direction" was not directly asked from the fashion entrepreneur's needs or the stakeholders offering, but it was presumed in the questions of finding the producers and industry partners and the showroom and retailer partners, as well as in the questions about the growth strategies and internalisation. What is common for all the stakeholders is that they are concentrated only on the Finnish market. Only Finpro and Tekes help companies in their growth strategies towards the international markets and only PreHelsinki is doing international PR and Marketing activities that help the entrepreneurs to gain international contacts in sales and retail. Some of the stakeholders, like Helsinki Design Forum and Helsinki Design Week bring the international contacts to Finland and some, like Helsinki Design Forum and Nordic Fashion Association help organise international fairs where also Finnish design entrepreneurs are invited.

But fashion entrepreneurs are supposed to be born global. The local Finnish market is not big enough for fashion businesses to thrive as was already revealed in the first chapter. Often fashion entrepreneurs prove themselves abroad, before opening shop in their local country (Lille, 2010). Global entrepreneurs face three distinctive challenges: New ventures usually lack the infrastructure to cope with dispersed operations and faraway markets (Isenberg D. J., 2008); this is why the cultural contexts of language, educational systems, political systems, religion and economic development heighten the psychological barriers of entrepreneurs (Beckerman, 1956).

			FINATEX	ORNAMO	DESIGN FORUM FINLAND	DESIGN DISTRICT	MTO	TMA
STARTING A NEW BUSINESS (2.9)	Finding the necessary information 3.4	Starting a company 1.8						
		Deciding the business form 2.0						
		Making a Business plan 2.7						
		Finding producers and industry partners 3.1	●				●	●
		Finding employees/business partners 3.5						
		Negotiating with showrooms and retailers 3.7				●		
		Finding funding 4.0						
DAILY BUSINESS ACTIVITIES (2.9)	Finding the necessary information 3.7	Invoicing and accounting 2.0		●				
		Insurances 2.5		●				
		Retirement and taxes 2.7		●				
		Making contracts 3.0		●				
		Taking part in Fairs and Showrooms 3.1	●		●			
		PR and Marketing 3.2			●			
		Finding retailers and clients 3.7				●	●	●
		Law 3.8		●				
GROWING THE BUSINESS (3.8)	Finding the necessary information 3.4	Creating a growth strategy 3.7						
		Growing the network of contacts 3.7						
		Finding and applying for travel grants 3.8						
		Internalization 4.0						
		Applying for export initiatives 4.2			●			
		Information available only for members	○	○		○	○	○

			MUOTIKAUPANLIITTO	NORDIC FASHION ASSOCIATION	FINPRO	TEKES	MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY	MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND EDUCATION	SUOMEN MESSUT	ROYAL MAJESTICS	AVEK	SKR	HELSINKI DESIGN WEEK	PREHELSINKI
STARTING A NEW BUSINESS (2.9)	Finding the necessary information 3.4	Starting a company 1.8					●							
		Deciding the business form 2.0					●							
		Making a Business plan 2.7					●							
		Finding producers and industry partners 3.1			●	●			●					
		Finding employees/business partners 3.5												
		Negotiating with showrooms and retailers 3.7												●
		Finding funding 4.0				●	●	●		●	●	●		
DAILY BUSINESS ACTIVITIES (2.9)	Finding the necessary information 3.7	Invoicing and accounting 2.0					●							
		Insurances 2.5					●							
		Retirement and taxes 2.7					●							
		Making contracts 3.0					●							
		Taking part in Fairs and Showrooms 3.1							●				●	●
		PR and Marketing 3.2		●									●	●
		Finding retailers and clients 3.7	●						●					●
		Law 3.8					●							
GROWING THE BUSINESS (3.8)	Finding the necessary information 3.4	Creating a growth strategy 3.7			●	●								
		Growing the network of contacts 3.7											●	●
		Finding and applying for travel grants 3.8						●			●	●		
		Internalization 4.0			●	●								●
		Applying for export initiatives 4.2		●				●						●
		Information available only for members	○		○	○								○

Also, the resources that entrepreneurs have, are not as developed as the larger companies, so they have trouble delivering the expected level of quality (Isenberg D. J., 2008), which in fashion entrepreneurship show for example in the slow process of finding retailers. The fashion entrepreneur needs to prove that they can manage quality deliveries 3 years in a row on average, before receiving an order from an retailer (Lille, 2010), since the retailers prefer the same suppliers, industrialised product quality, exact delivery dates, quality standards and packaging for transportation because it is less risky and thus reliable (Winkel, 2012).

Building these relationships with the buyers is time consuming. Sales people need to know the price list, rules, quality, delivery times, buying conditions, product adaptations possibilities, minimum order quantities etc. (Winkel, 2012), which in the Finnish fashion entrepreneurs case, is all done by the designers themselves.

Many of the key stakeholders thought someone else is, or is supposed to supply the services they were not supplying[11]. This shows the lack of communication between the stakeholders – they don't know their own ecosystem. The design entrepreneurs were also criticising the lack of fashion industry specific knowledge of many of the service providers and that existing stakeholders are too slow in movement and they have rigid organisational structures, and this creates a gap in the market (Schoemaker, 1995). The ecosystem should be able to ensure a pool of startup competent actors by being able to evaluate the early-stage businesses from a global fashion point of view, help find the right partners and give incentives that are aligned with the outcome.

[11] Helena Pekkarinen, Diges Ry, interview, 5.2.2013

RECAPITULATION

In this chapter we have shown that there are 4 different types of designers: Creative freedom -types, Traditional designer -types, New designer -types and Brand builder -types. Only the latter ones are entrepreneurial types, unless there is a founder team formed by the other types. It is important to concentrate on these latter ones, in order to analyse the real gaps in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This shows us that the amount of fashion entrepreneurs is not big, but that their challenges are real and that there is a lack of services offered to them.

By concentrating on the existing ventures, rather than the whole community, it is easier to find out the exact challenges the fashion entrepreneurs face in different stages of their company's life. We have also seen that there are a multitude of stakeholders in the fashion ecosystem, and that concentrating on the ones that offer entrepreneurial services instead of the external chains of production and adoption helps us simplify the complex ecosystem and see better the main gaps it has:

Many of the stakeholders offering services to the fashion entrepreneurs don't know enough about the specifics of the fashion field and its ecosystem, which interferes with the communication between the different actors, thus creating a gap.

The demand and offering are not finding each other because of a lack of communication between the different actors in the ecosystem, this also shows in the fact that information is difficult to acquire.

None of the ecosystem stakeholders offer services throughout the growth of the business, from ideation of a business model to expansion and exit.

There are not enough places for the fashion entrepreneur to grow their networks of contacts and find employees and business partners.

The Finnish fashion ecosystem is not that healthy, many challenges need to be overcome before it can thrive and become sustainable.

"The sustainability of the ecosystem comes from the fact that it has all the necessary facilitating components in place and that it creates positive spillovers."

4. FILLING THE GAP IN THE ECOSYSTEM

What are the challenges that need to be overcome in order for the Finnish fashion entrepreneurship ecosystem to thrive and create positive spillovers for creating growth that can bee seen in the local economy?

Following Schoemaker's planning tool (Schoemaker, 1995), we can create a competitive analysis of the existing situation and a future possibility. Scenario 1 represents the ecosystem at the moment. There is a gap where a new service is needed. Some of the actors were advising for the existing stakeholders (S in the image) to communicate and create new services through collaboration (scenario 2), but none have the necessary resources at the moment to act on this idea.

Based on Isenberg's ecosystem classification, the new services should first of all include an easier way to navigate through the existing information and they should provide relevant data about the fashion entrepreneurship in Finland, but as seen earlier, the sustainability of the ecosystem comes from the fact that it has all the necessary facilitating components in place (policy, market, capital, human skills, culture and support) and that it can create what Isenberg calls spillovers, and nourishes itself thus creating growth.

As we have seen, on a policy level this distinction is not understood correctly in many cases. Effective policy has in its heart an interest in democratising entry of entrepreneurs, thus has a Darwinist approach to resource allocation (Isenberg D. , 2011). Opportunities are the same for all starting entrepreneurs, they should be able to test their ideas, but without a trial at the “real markets”, the “gene-pool of entrepreneurs” is weakened (Isenberg D. , 2011). In Finland this is seen for example through the offered services that are provided for all first-time business. Almost half of the +100 designers that answered the first questionnaire have used the start-up money that is given by the government and many of them have applied for other sources of income for their businesses.

Isenberg says: “We shouldn’t concentrate on creating more new ventures, but encouraging the existing entrepreneurs for formation of high-quality and high-growth companies.” Also Shane (Shane, 2009) found, even policy makers often wrongly believe in creation of more new ventures will transform the economy instead of encouraging existing ones for a higher-quality level. In the case of the Finnish fashion field, the competence pool might not be competent enough and incentivised properly, this is why the importance of mapping out even more deeply the whole ecosystem locally (Sipola;Mainela;& Puhakka, 2013), which creates a need for better data about the field.

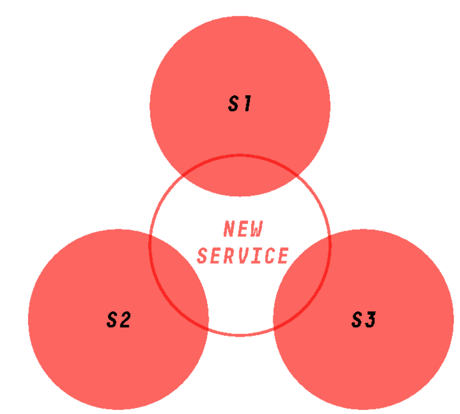
We should first concentrate on the gene pool of entrepreneurs by improving the possibility for fashion related business studies and keeping the designer–types balanced, so that we can then facilitate multidisciplinary and cross functional encounters. Since the designer’s path starts from an educational institution, this sparring should start already there, and since student driven entrepreneurial activities have shown already powerful impact also on financial and policy levels [12], why not trying it that way? From there, the culture will change automatically towards better and the market will follow through visible success.

The importance of branding and marketing and understanding that the fashion entrepreneurs should be aiming at a global market and that true innovation is needed in order to survive is essential. In fashion, this second is more difficult when talking about the actual products, the wearables, but in new service creation like web shops, and so on it is very survivable, so seeing the local Finnish strong points, innovation through new business models could be possible, by combining the strength that we have digital and technological innovations.

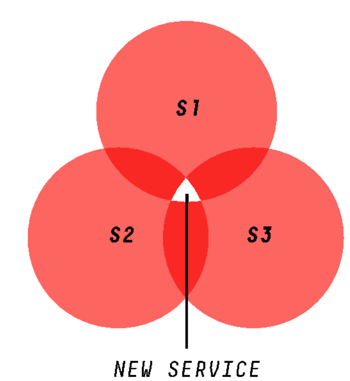
[12] AaltoEs, Slush, TurkuBoost, etc.

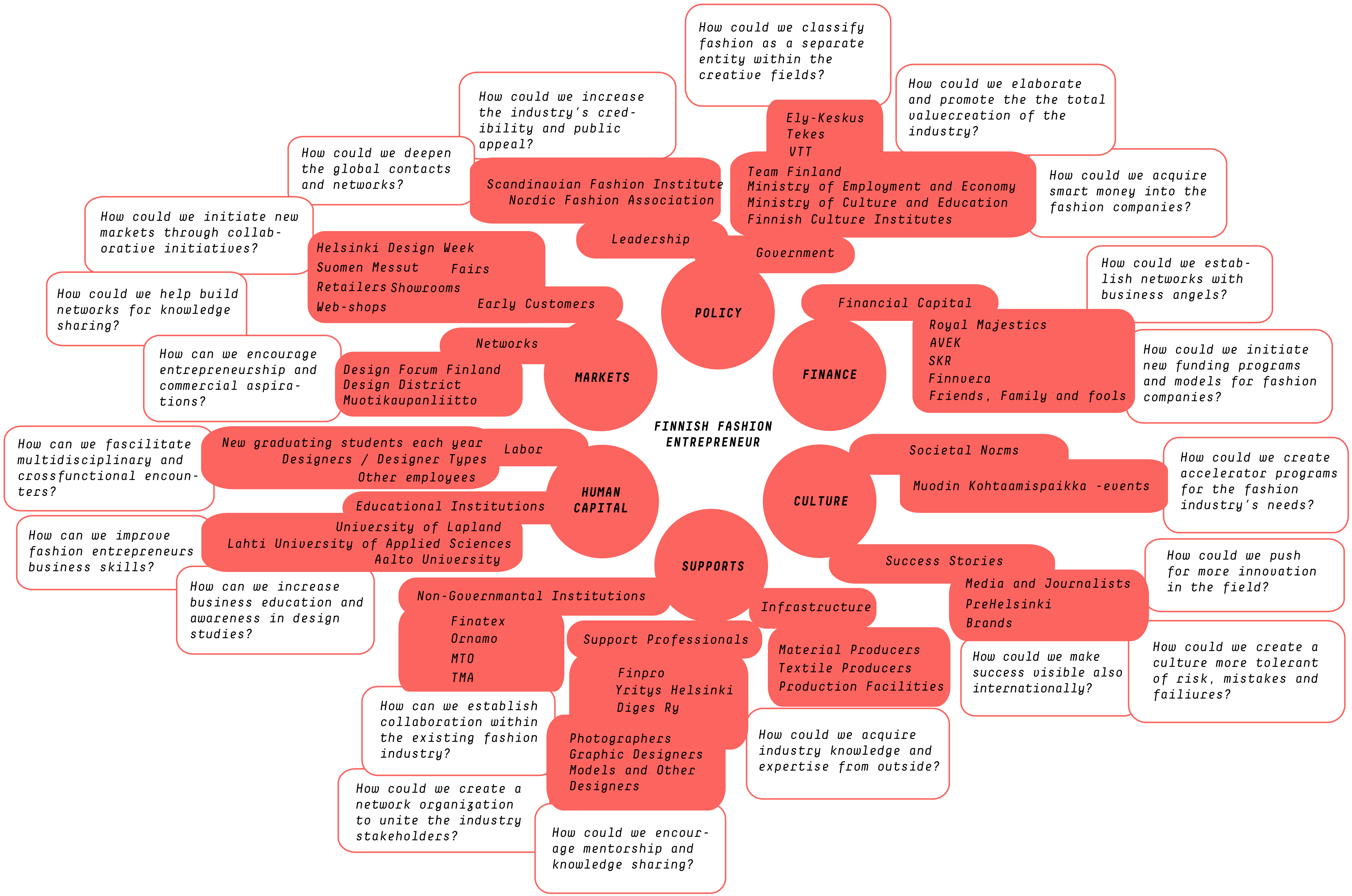
In this chapter we give ideas of the bottlenecks that need to be removed in order for the ecosystem to flourish, also through playful thought of future visions - remembering that even if the results could be incomplete, due to the fact that most of the data was collected through an online survey, one can argue that the domains of the Finnish fashion entrepreneurship ecosystem are not complete or that the communication between the entrepreneurs and the domains is not efficient enough. In order to foster the future prosperity of the industry and the new entrepreneurs entering the field, much needs to be done, for creating a sustainable competitive foundation.

SCENARIO 1



SCENARIO 2





FINNISH FASHION ENTREPRENEUR
POLICY
MARKETS
FINANCE
HUMAN CAPITAL
CULTURE
SUPPORTS
Leadership
Scandinavian Fashion Institute
Nordic Fashion Association
Government
Ely-Keskus
Tekes
VTT
Team Finland
Ministry of Employment and Economy
Ministry of Culture and Education
Finnish Culture Institutes
How could we classify fashion as a separate entity within the creative fields?
How could we increase the industry's cred-ibility and public appeal?
How could we elaborate and promote the the total valuecreation of the industry?
How could we acquire smart money into the fashion companies?
How could we deepen the global contacts and networks?
How could we initiate new markets through collab-orative initiatives?
Helsinki Design Week
Suomen Messut
Fairs
Retailers
Showrooms
Web-shops
Early Customers
How could we help build networks for knowledge sharing?
Networks
Design Forum Finland
Design District
Muotikaupanliitto
How can we encourage entrepreneurship and commercial aspira-tions?
Financial Capital
Royal Majestics
AVEK
SKR
Finnvera
Friends, Family and fools
How could we estab-lish networks with business angels?
How could we initiate new funding programs and models for fashion companies?
How can we fascilitate multidisciplinary and crossfunctional encoun-ters?
New graduating students each year
Designers / Designer Types
Other employees
Labor
Educational Institutions
University of Lapland
Lahti University of Applied Sciences
Aalto University
How can we improve fashion entrepreneurs business skills?
How can we increase business education and awareness in design studies?
Societal Norms
Muodin Kohtaamispaikka -events
How could we create accelerator programs for the fashion industry's needs?
Success Stories
Media and Journalists
PreHelsinki
Brands
How could we push for more innovation in the field?
How could we make success visible also internationally?
How could we create a culture more tolerant of risk, mistakes and failiures?
Non-Governmantal Institutions
Finatex
Ornamo
MTO
TMA
Infrastructure
Material Producers
Textile Producers
Production Facilities
Support Professionals
Finpro
Yritys Helsinki
Diges Ry
Photographers
Graphic Designers
Models and Other Designers
How can we establish collaboration within the existing fashion industry?
How could we create a network organization to unite the industry stakeholders?
How could we encour-age mentorship and knowledge sharing?
How could we acquire industry knowledge and expertise from outside?

"Towards increasing the market value of fashion business domestically and internationally and using the momentum we have with the fashion design excellence."

5. CONCLUSIONS

Globally the fashion business is a huge opportunity, but in Finland fashion entrepreneurship falls in between industry and culture categories on a policy level and is thus not receiving the support it needs. The design has been proven to be excellent, but the business has trouble creating an impact on the local economy and competing within international markets. The field requires a systemic change to the way we approach the fashion ecosystem and it is not enough to create "just another initiative", without having all the pieces of the puzzle in place first.

Isenberg's ideology, of the structural components of an ecosystem and how it is the interaction between the organizations and the individuals that affect the well being of the whole community, gave this research a framework for analysing the components the Finnish fashion entrepreneurship field. This research points out the members of the Finnish fashion entrepreneurship ecosystem and concentrates on the interactions between the two: the entrepreneurs and the stakeholders. As it was pointed out, emphasizing the study of entrepreneurs and startups as pool of competence together with other relevant actors present in the ecosystem helped to understand the challenges that design entrepreneurs face when entering the entrepreneurial path.

It has been revealed that not all fashion designers are entrepreneurial types and that it is important to find the ones that are, in order to analyse the real gaps in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. By concentrating on the existing ventures, rather than the whole community, it is easier to find out the real challenges that fashion entrepreneurs face. It has been shown that the amount of fashion entrepreneurs is not actually that big, but that their challenges are real and vary widely.

We have also seen that there are a multitude of stakeholders in the fashion ecosystem, and that by concentrating on the ones that offer entrepreneurial services, instead of the external chains of production and adoption, this helps us clarify the complex ecosystem and see better the challenges it has. The stakeholders offering services to the fashion entrepreneurs don't know enough about the specifics of the fashion field and its ecosystem, which creates a significant shortcoming and interference in the communication between the different actors, thus creating a gap, why the demand and offering are not finding each other. The Finnish fashion ecosystem is not that healthy, many challenges need to be overcome before it can thrive and become sustainable.

In the end insights have been identified as to the bottlenecks that need to be removed in order for the ecosystem to flourish, also through thoughts of future visions and scenarios that question if a new stakeholder should be created or if the existing stakeholders should just work more tightly together.

As promised at the outset of this thesis, this study has explored the possibility of creating a better support organism for the Finnish fashion field. Each stakeholder should look at this holistic overview in order to better understand the ecosystem they act in and think about what they could do to support the field better. If no change is done, many of the support organisms will become futile and will loose value and meaning over time, maybe even disappear. Everybody should work towards facilitating the collaboration between the different stakeholders and help fashion entrepreneurship - it is the only way we can increase the market value of fashion business domestically and internationally and use the momentum we have with the fashion design excellence. A sustainable entrepreneurship ecosystem should not have so many gaps and weaknesses, but offer ideas for fashion field specific solutions and opportunities. It should support growth and access to international markets by producing extraordinary innovation in business know-how, and design talent.

The general implications are, that each ecosystem stakeholder on policy, finance, culture, support, market and human capital level

should ask themselves the important questions presented on the page 62-63 and communicate with each other, thus creating a common goal and action plan on how to create a more sustainable ecosystem for the Finnish fashion field.

1. Human Capital
Offering a possibility of an entrepreneurial path to the fashion designer by multidisciplinary collaboration
Understanding the division of designer types and fostering each type towards their own employment format

2. Culture
Tolerating risk, mistakes and failure
Making success visible internationally

3. Supports
Establish collaboration within the existing fashion industry
Creating a network organisation to unite the industry stakeholders
Encourage mentorship and knowledge-sharing
Acquire industry knowledge and expertise from outside

4. Markets
Encourage entrepreneurship and commercial aspirations
Help build networks for knowledge sharing
Initiate new markets through collaboration initiatives

5. Finance
Acquire smart money into the fashion companies
Establish networks with business angels
Initiating new funding programs and models for the fashion companies
Develop accelerator programs and models for fashion industry's needs

6. Policy
Deepening the global contacts and networks
Increasing the industry's credibility and public appeal
Classifying fashion as a separate entity withing the creative industries
Elaborate and promote the total value creation of the industry

Many of these points are valid for more than one stakeholder, thus some overlapping should occur and the ecosystem should be though simultaneously from different point of views.

The specific implications for creating a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem for the Finnish fashion field are

1. Creating an easy way to navigate through the information by producing relevant data about fashion entrepreneurship and it's opportunities

2. Stop democratising the entry of entrepreneurs in the fashion field by

Better allocation of resources

Understanding the different designer types and improving the gene-pool by offering a fashion business related path in fashion studies

Offering the entrepreneurial types and opportunity to test their ideas in real markets and aim at real innovation by facilitating multidisciplinary encounters

Encourage the existing entrepreneurs for high-quality and high-growth business

Adopt the existing fashion entrepreneurs learnings by sharing their knowledge

3. Having an organisation that owns the fashion field specific knowledge, to facilitate the interaction between the different stakeholder organisations and individuals and to advocate the legislators for the future.

Personally I feel this could be an amazing opportunity for any existing organisation to become the facilitator of the fashion ecosystem in Finland, but at the moment, since the ecosystem is still so young, the best place where to initiate all this could be an educational institution like the Aalto University, since they are already the Finnish leaders in startup communities through Aalto Entrepreneurship Society and Startup Sauna, the entrepreneurial education through the Ventures Program and Executive education and, last but not least, in fashion and design education.

REFERENCES
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APPENDICES

Available on demand from the author:

List of contacted designers (N+100) (Excel file / Google drive)

Q100 results of 1st and 2nd query of +100 designers in Finland (Excel file / Google drive)

Q20 results of 1st and 2nd questionnaire of the 20 fashion entrepreneurs in Finland (Google drive / Google form)

Finnish fashion companies yearly revenue (Excel file / Google drive)

List of stakeholders according to fashion entrepreneurs (Word file)

Additions to the footnotes:

[1] Excellent design education, top ranking of universities in the world; Young Finnish fashion designers winning two years in a row the Hyeres fashion competition; top-designer positions in internationally renown fashion companies for Finnish designers etc.

[2] Finatex 2013

[3] http://design.aalto.fi/en/current/news/2015-02-02-004/

[4] http://www.designforum.fi/viestinta/lehdistotiedotteet/design_forum_finlandille_uusi_strategia_ja_toimitusjohtaja/

[5] Finatex 2015 (Member companies of Finatex)

[6] See exhibit "List of contacted designers (N+100)"

[7] Term used by Brad Feld to describe an entrepreneur who has the potential of being a role-model for others (Feld, 2012).

[8] Hyeres competition

[9] Here to simplify the writing, I will call type II –designers also "designers", even though they might actually be something else of background.

[10] Finatex and Ornamo membership registries, available online

[11] Helena Pekkarinen, Diges Ry, interview, 5.2.2013

[12] AaltoEs, Slush, TurkuBoost, etc. as examples of student driven initiatives for supporting entrepreneurship (IDBM Industry Project, How to create a startup ecosystem, 2013)

Image on page 37 courtesy of Parson's, attributed creative commons, modiefied by author.

AFTERWORDS

When I finished my fashion MA studies in the Aalto University in 2010, I had mostly concentrated on artistic creation and costume design through out my student life. Photography, video work, imagining new ways of showing fashion in a more interesting way than a catwalk, was close to my heart and since I remember, I had been organising fashion related shows and performances to test my theories on the explanation of the source of inspiration being a way of opening the world of fashion to the viewer. It was then, in 2010, while moving to Berlin to continue working on my art of storytelling through fashion, that Helsinki was chosen to be the World Design Capital and I felt that I needed to use this unique opportunity to tell the stories of Finnish fashion and curate an exhibition that would finally give artistic freedom to my fellow designers to explain the background of their work, their source of inspiration. Helsinki Fresh exhibition and Fresh Creatives book were born, followed by Fresh Agency, concentrating on Finnish fashion export and collaborative initiatives.

Suddenly I found myself being an entrepreneur, CEO of my own company, curator, art director, producer and manager, and doing everything that follows with those titles: budgeting, planning, marketing, applying for financial support, filling up tax reports, writing press releases and mingling with decision-makers at different events, just to mention few. At the same time I became close with the 25 designers we were representing in Berlin and I started to understand their challenges, wishes and hopes for the future, because I spoke their language and understood what they meant when they talked about them. It was then that I knew that in order to become better at my new job, I should be able to communicate these things with the new people I was meeting in the world of business, finance and bureaucracy, so that I could help in the communication between these two worlds, design and business, so dependent of each other, but so far away in understanding each other.

Throughout my studies in IDBM, I have been concentrating on the communication between designers and business people by gaining the necessary vocabulary in order to help fashion designers entrepreneurship understanding. My Industry Project pushed me deep into the blue ocean of the tech startups from where I was able to swim ashore back towards fashion design, while with each breath, taking learnings with me by putting them into the fashion context.

For the first time I made a business model for my own company and thought of it's possible return on investment, I played with a pricing model that would sustain a Fashion Institute, I was solving the actual market size for offered services by an imaginary fashion accelerator and how all this could be done in a ground breaking way that could be an true innovation for the world wide industry. I was also playing with different scenarios for the future, finding ways to prototype my ideas in cheap and simple ways and thinking of ways to make the processes easier and more understandable.

The idea of this thesis has been here since the beginning of my studies, but the words haven't. Also, the research question was known in the beginning, but there was a lack of understanding of the holistic view on the matter. Now I have the words and a reasonable view for communicating in the Finnish fashion entrepreneurship ecosystem.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank especially Mikko Koria for his energetic support and positive attitude, even when I have struggled and Peter McGrory for teaching me that design is much more complex, powerful and opportunity rich and reminding me of my designer background, so that I don't get too lost in the ocean of business and entrepreneurship. Will Cardwell for his networks and introductions especially to Jaana Beidler and her new winds and both of them for giving me a superb opportunity. I also want to thank Kalevi Ekman for creating the best environment for learning, sharing and caring, Peter Kelly for collective cooking, pushing me with excel sheets and giving me the opportunity to cross my boundaries over to venture capitalism and Fabian Sepulveda for his funny stories and grounded business examples.

A special thanks goes to Liisa, my business partner, for bearing with me all these years and for showing me how to just do things without thinking too much and all 25 designers that have asked me questions I didn't know how to answer and Helena and Kirsi and many others I have interviewed for the purpose of this study, for strongly agreeing and proving my point.

Also, I need to thank all my class mates, especially those with who I've worked with in small groups: you have been my best teachers in communication, by spending countless hours with heated discussions over projects, food, wine and parties.